

**Pennsylvania School Funding Campaign  
Press Conference  
State Capital, Harrisburg  
January 23, 2008**

***Remarks by Caroline Allen, President, Pennsylvania PTA***

Good morning! It is my honor to serve as the President of the Pennsylvania PTA. The Pennsylvania PTA is over 100 years old and almost 90,000 members strong. Our members are diverse: some are wealthy, some are poor; some hold doctorates while others never graduated from high school; some are students, some are young fathers, some have children in post-secondary education and some are grandparents. Yet, no matter how different we all may be, we have one thing in common: Kids! We volunteer because we believe in our PTA vision statement: *Making every child's potential a reality.*

But, how can we accomplish this when there is tremendous inequity in the way schools are funded in Pennsylvania? There can be as much as a quarter million dollar difference in what is spent between a classroom of 25 students in one school district versus another school district.

How can we accomplish this when local taxpayers struggle to make their local school tax payment? Why won't the General Assembly enact legislation that would make the state fund no less than 50% of public education like the majority of states in our country?

And how can we expect our school administrators and faculty to make every child proficient in the state standards when we now know through the Costing Out Study, that 94% of our school districts are underfunded by more than \$4 billion? I will never forget attending an Education Policy and Leadership Center breakfast forum where a rural school superintendent related his tale of diving in a neighboring school district's dumpster to collect thrown out text books to put into use in his district. Now, please tell me, how can we have those students compete effectively in a global economy?

Yes, we must hold school districts accountable with public funds, but we must, at the same time, hold the General Assembly accountable for funding the state's proper share of public education in Pennsylvania. This share must be adequate to allow all students to achieve to their greatest potential.

Does it cost more to educate some children than others? You bet! Education is a people business and schools must have the resources available to meet the needs of not only special education students, but gifted students as well.

Schools must be able to teach to the different learning styles of its diverse population.

Personally, I am thrilled that the Pennsylvania PTA is a part of this great campaign with so many other associations and organizations. Never in my 13 years of educational advocacy have I witnessed this agreement between these diverse groups.

This campaign offers the ASSET proposal for funding. It is transparent and best of all, understandable. If this proposal is accepted, no longer will there be only 10 individuals in the state who truly understand the intricacies of how schools are funded in Pennsylvania. The time for school funding reform is upon us! I challenge the General Assembly to find the political will to address how schools are to be funded in the future, and guess what, the future is now!

The Pennsylvania PTA asks that a quality public education be available to all children so that they can each reach their potential. Let's make our vision a reality. Thank you.